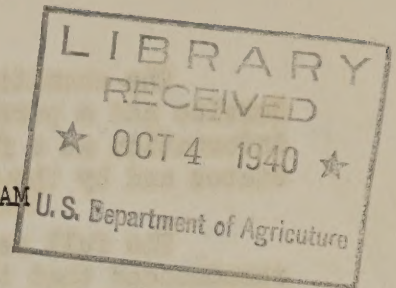


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United States Department of Agriculture
EXTENSION SERVICE
Washington, D. C.

REPORT OF 1940 EDITORIAL COMMITTEE
APPOINTED BY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR BRIGHAM
TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE
FEDERAL EXTENSION SERVICE ON
THE INFORMATIONAL PROGRAM



Meeting Held in Connection With the
National Conference of Extension Workers,
Washington, D. C., May 6-10, 1940

Purpose of the Conference

There is a vital community of interest between the extension editors, who serve as informational outlets for agricultural extension in the various States of the Union, and the Federal Extension Service headquarters in Washington. The extension editor in a State is confronted with the problem of adequately and fairly preparing and presenting to the rural people of his State the important news and information developed in the United States Department of Agriculture and its various agencies in addition to the usual timely and usable information developed within his own State through the land-grant college and its agricultural agencies. There arises then the delicate problem of relationships, the need for a full understanding of policies, and the question of the best use of available outlets. Duplication of effort needs to be avoided insofar as possible, and the people of a given State need to be fully informed in those matters of National and State policy concerning their general welfare.

For that reason a committee of extension editors representing the various sections of the United States was appointed to meet with extension authorities in Washington to consider some of these problems. The committee selected continued the deliberations begun by a similar and larger committee which was called to Washington in the spring of 1939. The 1940 committee reiterated some of the recommendations made by the previous committee and in addition gave much attention to the need for an improved annual report form to be used by extension agents and specialists throughout the Nation.

It was felt that this report form should be simplified so that data useful in supplying definite information as to the actual activities and results of extension work might be secured, but that much of the involved and complicated features of the present report form could be eliminated. Since the annual report form can be used to excellent advantage in securing data valuable as the basis of news stories and reports to the people as to extension activities, the committee felt that this feature might be kept in mind in developing a new form of report.

The committee also renewed its request that the Federal Extension Service add a person qualified to establish a national program of extension information as a further aid to the efforts now being made in the various States and by the present personnel of the Federal office.

The full report of the committee is attached herewith, and it is recommended that this report be placed before the American Association of Agricultural College Editors for discussion and adoption.

/s/ Frank H. Jeter

Frank H. Jeter, Chairman.
(North Carolina State College)

Report of the Committee

- (1) National information program. - This committee renews the recommendations made by last year's committee of extension editors relative to the establishment of a national program of information by the Federal Extension Service in national and regional magazines, news services, etc. It recommends that a well-qualified person be secured to serve as informational contact man for the Federal Extension Service, this man to have charge of this informational program. The committee believes that this man should have:
 - (a) Experience which has placed him in close contact with metropolitan newspapers and journals and magazines of national circulation.
 - (b) A sympathetic attitude toward farm life and extension work.
 - (c) A good sense of news values and outstanding writing ability.

This committee feels that the purpose of instituting a national informational program on extension work, in accordance with these recommendations, is to disseminate sound information through the news channels of the Nation, rather than to propagandize. The committee believes that such information should be based on the adoption of scientific research and findings and should be representative of the highest principles of field demonstration and teaching.

In making this recommendation the committee is well aware of the splendid work which has already been done by representatives of the Federal Extension Service in contacting publishers of magazines of Nation-wide circulation and in counseling with representatives of metropolitan dailies and press associations upon the importance of extension work to the well-being of agriculture and the Nation.

- (2) Use of editors for disseminating informational techniques. - This committee recommends that, once a year, in each of the several regions of the Nation a State extension editor be selected to -
- (a) Visit the other extension editors in his region for the purpose of securing facts as to the work, difficulties, progress, and efforts of these other extension editors, and
 - (b) To transmit this information to the other extension editors of that region and to the Federal Extension Service.
- (3) Relationships with Department action agencies. - This committee feels that the cooperative procedure outlined with respect to the informational relationships between the Extension Service and the Soil Conservation Service should apply to the dissemination of information on the work of the other Federal agricultural action agencies. (See "Responsibilities in Information," excerpt from "A Policy Statement on Relationships Between the Soil Conservation Service and the Extension Service" 3-29-40).
- (4) Revision of annual report form. - This committee is in accord with the proposal that has been made to revise and simplify the system used by the county extension agents in making their annual reports.
- (a) The committee recommends that changes be made in the report forms so that the more important phases of Extension work will be emphasized and so that the reports may more fully reflect present activities and trends in extension work.
 - (b) The committee recommends that the reports of the county extension agent be made more in the form of a narrative report containing essential statistics which will furnish basic facts upon which the narrative is based. We feel that a narrative report only, unsupported by such statistics, tends to deal too greatly in generalities.
 - (c) The committee suggests that the statistics be on a uniform basis in order that they may be summarized on State, Regional, and National bases. It believes that a definite outline should be provided for use in the preparation of the reports, and that only such statistics should be required as are essential to the completion of State, Regional, and National records.
 - (d) The committee recognizes that the annual report form as now constituted tends to influence the plan of work in a county, no matter what program has been previously agreed upon.

- (e) The committee feels that the work of the cooperative extension service has advanced beyond the field of skills and practices; therefore a change is needed in the annual report form to reflect the full scope of the work.
- (f) For the purpose of determining the new type of report, the committee recommends that advice and suggestions be secured from one or two selected extension workers in each State.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED, MAY 9, 1940.....

THE COMMITTEE OF STATE EXTENSION EDITORS:

Andrew W. Hopkins, (Wisconsin)

Kenneth B. Roy, (Arkansas)

Harry P. Mileham, (Vermont)

W. D. Porter, (Utah)

F. H. Jeter, (North Carolina)
Chairman.